

## Andrew Jackson Donelson to Andrew Jackson, October 30, 1830, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

### ANDREW J. DONELSON TO JACKSON.1

1 Library of Congress, Donelson Papers.

Washington, October 30, 1830.

*Dear Uncle:* I have taken according to your request a copy of your letter to me of this date which is enclosed. The letter to which it replies was the answer to that of yours which you requested to be returned and was accordingly returned.

I have no wish to have that letter sooner than your leisure and convenience will enable you to give it; as the views I intend to take of it and the whole subject will, I trust, be a termination of the unpleasant correspondence; and besides I do not desire to present those views until the limitation which you have imposed upon my residence here expires.

In your house, my dear Uncle, as your guest I acknowledge that the same comity and politeness are due to Mrs. Eaton that are to the ladies of the other cabinet officers or those of other gentlemen. A pledge to secure this for the future, altho' it implies that without it a distinction would be drawn, I have never refused to make. Whether there be justice in requiring this pledge considering what has passed, I did not undertake to enquire; but I certainly did consider it as given both in my conversations and in the expressions of my letter.

Out of your house I claim only the same general discretion in behalf of my family that is possessed by all others. To require them to pay a visit to Mrs. Eaton or any one else,

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where it is obvious that there is no reciprocal respect is at once to degrade them. The same principle would oblige me to submit to all the insults which private intercourse is subject to in every sphere of life. You did not when a prisoner in the revolutionary war obey the order of the enemy who had you in his power to clean his boots. Yet you find fault with my determination merely to keep out of the way of insult.

I had as well here as elsewhere notice the allusion you have made to Mrs. Donelsons making her Mother's house her home instead of the Hermitage during your recent visit there, because it seems to be interpreted in an unfriendly manner. You have not forgotten the note of Mrs. Eaton in which she refused to dine with you because my family was in your house just before you started for Tennessee. I have not forgotten the language which you employed on that occasion, and the determination you then expressed of carrying us home and leaving us there. Where was our home? Were we not bound from respect even to your feelings not to put ourselves in the way of the honors you intended to pay to Mr. and Mrs Eaton at the Hermitage? Was there nothing in Mrs. Donelsons long absence from her Mother to excuse the desire to stay with her without incurring your disapprobation?2

2 These letters from Major Donelson reveal Mrs. Eaton as vindictive and belligerent. Her influence over Jackson was strong, and she used it in fighting for recognition. In this connection see Van Buren's description of the last call he made on Mrs. Eaton, in company with Jackson, just after Eaton's resignation of the office of Secretary of War, in which she showed marked coolness for Jackson. Van Buren's *Autobiography*, p. 407.

yr. affectionate nephew